

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /054 W

----- 109691

R 211420Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8217

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 0128

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FI

SUBJECT: MINISTER KILLED IN AUTO CRASH

1. FINLAND'S "SECOND" MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH, PENTTI PEKKARINEN, DIED JANUARY 20 AS A RESULT OF INJURIES SUSTAINED IN AN AUTOMOBILE CRASH EARLIER IN THE DAY IN HIS HOME DISTRICT OF KUOPIO. NO SUCCESSOR HAS YET BEEN NAMED. HIS PARLIAMENTARY SEAT WILL BE TAKEN BY TOIVO YLAJARVI.

2. PEKKARINEN, 57, HAS REPRESENTED THE CENTER PARTY IN PARLIAMENT FOR 16 YEARS BUT WAS NOT A MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE. HE HAD ATTAINED CONSIDERABLE NOTORIETY IN RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER. A TRIP TO MIAMI BEACH LAST NOVEMBER ON "DOCTOR'S ORDERS" (WITH THE DOCTOR ACCOMPANYING) WAS MERCILESSLY LAMPOONED IN THE PRESS AND PROMPTED PEKKARINEN TO MAKE AN ANGRY DIATRIBE AGAINST THE MEDIA ON HIS RETURN. SHORTLY THEREAFTER HE OPPOSED HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES IN A CABINET VOTE ON A CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENT. IN PARLIAMENT THERE IS SPECULATION THAT THE STRESSES HE WAS UNDER MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO HIS DEATH.

3. PEKKARINEN'S DEMISE MAY SPARE THE CENTER PARTY
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AN EMBARRASSING ELECTION ISSUE. THE EMBASSY WAS

TOLD RECENTLY BY A HIGH-RANKING CENTER PARTY
OFFICIAL THAT THE RUMORS AND INNUENDOS CIRCULATING
ABOUT PEKKARINEN'S UNETHICAL FINANCIAL CONNECTIONS
WERE WELL-FOUNDED. NEITHER THE PRESS NOR THE PARTY
HAD PROOF, AND THE PARTY HOPED THE LID WOULD STAY
ON UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT ELECTIONS WHEN PEKKARINEN
COULD HAVE BEEN QUIETLY DROPPED FROM THE CABINET.
KREHBIEL

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NNN

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TAGS: PINT, FI, (PEKKARINEN, PENTTI)
To: STATE
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